

Agenda – Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 2 – Senedd

Meeting date: Thursday, 6 July 2017

Meeting time: 09.30

For further information contact:

Steve George

Committee Clerk

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1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

2 Evidence session on Historic Wales

(9:30 – 10:30)

(Pages 1 – 24)

Ken Skates AM, Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure
Jason Thomas, Deputy Director, Commercial and Property Operations
Gareth Howells, Member of the Historic Wales Steering Group

3 News Journalism in Wales: Evidence Session 7

(10:30–11:15)

(Pages 25 – 37)

Llion Iwan, Head of Content and Distribution, S4C

4 News Journalism in Wales: Evidence Session 8

(11:15 – 12:00)

(Pages 38 – 46)

John Toner, NUJ National Organiser for Wales and Freelancer
Nick Powell, Member of the NUJ's Welsh Executive Council and NUJ Father of Chapel (FoC) of ITV Wales
Martin Shipton, Member of the NUJ's Welsh Executive Council and Chair of the NUJ's Trinity Mirror Group Chapel



5 News Journalism in Wales: Evidence Session 9

(12:00 – 12:45)

(Pages 47 – 69)

Rachel Howells, Editor, Port Talbot Magnet

Thomas Sinclair, Editor, Pembrokeshire Herald

6 Papers to note

Letter from Adam Price AM regarding National Assembly for Wales Official Language Scheme

(Pages 70 – 95)

7 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the following business:

8 Private debrief

(12:45 – 13:00)

9 The Future of S4C: Consideration of Draft Report

(13:00 – 13:15)

(Pages 96 – 125)

Agenda Item 2

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Historic Wales

A roadmap towards Success, Resilience and Sustainability for the Heritage of Wales

February 2017

HISTORIC WALES

A roadmap towards Success, Resilience and Sustainability for the Heritage of Wales

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. On 28 September 2016, the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure announced that he would establish a Steering Group “to review and develop options related to the delivery of the manifesto commitment to create Historic Wales, which would bring together many of the commercial functions of Cadw and Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales” (see Terms of Reference at Appendix 1). Additional announcements by the Cabinet Secretary have confirmed that some functions of the National Library of Wales and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (the Commission) are also potentially in scope and that the independence of each institution will be maintained.
- 1.2. A Steering Group with senior representation from the four national organisations – Cadw, Amgueddfa Cymru, National Library of Wales and the Commission - as well as the three trade unions, has met five times and agreed a set of objectives, principles and recommendations which are set out below.
- 1.3. In determining its recommendations the Steering Group also gave regard to the following reports:
 - a report of a committee chaired by Professor Terry Stevens in 2015 on how Cadw could enhance its commercial operations; and
 - *Investing in the future to protect the past*, a scoping report produced by PwC to facilitate the work of an advisory group chaired by Baroness Randerson

2. Key Objectives

- 2.1. ***Help to persuade more people to enjoy and take part in creative activity:*** Greater use of heritage and cultural services, in particular to reach new audiences and communities. Greater use of digital delivery and engagement. Facilitate a greater contribution to tackling poverty through delivering elements of the Fusion Programme.
- 2.2. ***Work to improve the sustainability, reach and resilience of the national cultural institutions by developing their commercial, marketing and fundraising capacity:*** The establishment of a new Strategic Partnership which will facilitate innovative commercial services, increase income generation, make the optimum use of commercial resources and formalise collaboration in terms of appropriate commercial activities between the heritage and cultural bodies to diversify their income base.
- 2.3. ***Work with partners to enhance the visitor experience at national institution sites:*** Greater maintenance and nurturing of professional skills, together with

sustainable structures and appropriate governance arrangements which encourage greater investment in cultural and place-based regeneration projects.

3. Key Principles

- 3.1. Because of charity law, governing charters and other statutory requirements, the recommendations will respect the identity, integrity, independence and core purposes of the national institutions and be subject to the approval of their governing bodies.
- 3.2. A feasibility study and a business case will be developed for each recommendation where appropriate, and will include an analysis of the potential financial and non-financial benefits, risks and costs for each individual partner.
- 3.3. All recommendations are linked to outcomes, and are intended to work in harmony with each other rather than operate in isolation. They build on the evidence provided by the PwC report, and discussions that have taken place in recent months. In keeping with the PwC recommendation all major commercial projects or other significant proposals will be developed and tested by the new Strategic Partnership (see 4.3 below).
- 3.4. The Steering Group wants to give strong incentives to staff and institutions to increase the income they generate. This would be achieved by sustained investment by Government in the development of the institutions, and assurance that additional income will supplement, not be a substitute, for Grant in Aid.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1. **CADW: A NEW NATIONAL INSTITUTION FOR WALES OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT.** It is proposed that Cadw should become either a charitable body, or an executive agency, outside of government, based on a business case to identify the best option. **Action: The Welsh Government to indicate its preferred option by 30 September 2017 followed by public consultation if required.**
- 4.2. **SPONSORSHIP AND STATUTORY DUTIES.** Each of the options under 4.1 will require a review of Welsh Government arrangements for the exercise of its statutory duties and sponsorship responsibilities (through budget setting, remit letters and operational plans). This could be achieved by the creation of a new heritage division within Government that will be enhanced by including oversight of the historic environment alongside museums, archives and libraries, and thus facilitating skills, expertise and workforce development on a pan-Wales basis. **Action: To be undertaken alongside 4.1 with the Welsh Government to indicate its preferred option by 30 September 2017.**
- 4.3. **WORKING TOGETHER: A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP.** The senior executives of the three national institutions and Cadw, supported by full trade union engagement will form a Strategic Partnership and a formal agreement – underpinned by remit letters to the national institutions - to achieve its goals. Between April and December 2017 this group will develop business cases and/or reports for recommendations 4.4 to 4.7 and 4.9. The group will commit to drive all agreed collaborative initiatives. A full review of the role and structure of the

Strategic Partnership will be undertaken jointly by the Sponsor Division and the Partnership two years after its establishment. **Action: Establishment of the Strategic Partnership by April 2017**

4.4. COLLABORATIVE DELIVERY OF COMMERCIAL FUNCTIONS: The Strategic Partnership will collaborate to improve all commercial revenue streams where feasible and appropriate, including but not limited to: retail (including online), food and beverages, and venue hire **Action: Strategic Partnership to identify the functions and means of delivery by 30 September 2017.**

4.5. COLLABORATIVE DELIVERY OF BACK OFFICE FUNCTIONS. The Strategic Partnership will investigate the potential for collaborative delivery – while protecting jobs and expertise - of back office functions including HR and IT systems, policies and procedures. **Action: Strategic Partnership to produce a report on outcome of investigation by 31 December 2017.**

4.6. CULTURAL TOURISM. Joint marketing of national campaigns and events, possibly through an ‘Historic Wales’ brand, working within and as part of a wider ‘Visit Wales’ brand to build on the success of recent campaigns and cultural tourism initiatives. **Action: planning by Strategic Partnership with the Welsh Government by 30 September 2017.**

4.7. DEVELOPMENT OF BLAENAVON WORLD HERITAGE SITE. The Strategic Partnership (alongside Torfaen local authority and Visit Wales) will pilot a more collaborative partnership model at the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site to enhance and promote existing and potential UNESCO sites in Wales and other heritage tourism hotspots. **Action: Strategic Partnership to produce a feasibility study with Torfaen local authority by 31 December 2017.**

4.8. A CULTURAL SECTOR SKILLS STRATEGY. The Strategic Partnership and the Museums, Archives and Libraries Division of Welsh Government, in collaboration with other stakeholders, will lead on the development of a skills strategy to enhance workplace opportunities for staff in the culture and heritage sector in Wales. **Action: Strategic Partnership and the Museums, Archives and Libraries Division to develop a strategy by October 2018.**

4.9. HISTORIC WALES. The appropriate use of the term ‘Historic Wales’ (and alternatives) will be tested against a number of options using market research, taking account of the cultural role and areas of expertise of the national institutions. For example, consideration could be given to using such a term under recommendations 4.1, 4.3 and 4.6. **Action: Strategic Partnership to undertake market research by 31 December 2017.**

5. NEXT STEPS

5.1. Consideration of the report of the Steering Group by the Cabinet Secretary and the respective Boards of the national institutions by March 2017.

5.2. If the report is accepted, progress work to develop business case on options for the positioning of Cadw outside of Welsh Government. March – September 2017 followed by public consultation if required.

5.3. Strategic Partnership to be formed by April 2017, initially to undertake business cases and/or research for collaborative initiatives of the three national institutions. April – December 2017.

5.4. Implementation of the remaining agreed actions to be taken forward from October 2017.

APPENDIX 1: Steering Group Terms of Reference and Membership

APPENDIX 2: Strategic Partnership – Organogram

APPENDIX 3: Benefits and Outcomes

APPENDIX 1:

Heritage Services in Wales

Terms of Reference for the Steering Group

Role and scope

Working within the broad framework directed by the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, the Steering Group will review and develop options related to the delivery of the manifesto commitment to create Historic Wales, which would bring together many of the commercial functions of Cadw and Amgueddfa Cymru — National Museum Wales.

The steering group will draw upon the findings of the PwC report, *Investing in the future to protect the past*, and agree which organisations and functions fall within the scope of the review, which may also include the National Library of Wales and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales. The group may also consider alternative proposals which could potentially achieve the same goals and fully realise the commercial potential of Wales' heritage bodies and organisations, whilst protecting their independence, individual identity, integrity and core purpose.

The group will ensure that staff consideration is integral to decision-making and that Historic Wales, in whatever form they recommend it is constituted, provides real opportunities for staff engagement, development and career progression.

The group will fully consider the wider sectoral context, including the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the need for cost-effective delivery.

The review will consider which commercial functions are core to each organisation and which could potentially be merged under Historic Wales.

Objectives

1. Peer review the business case development for the creation of Historic Wales;
2. Agree the purpose, form and function of Historic Wales and those organisations that fall within its scope;
3. Deliver an implementation plan including timeline and delivery resource for the creation of Historic Wales.

Frequency of meetings

The group will meet monthly and report back to the Cabinet Secretary with a business case by January 2017, which will inform a public consultation. The group will proactively support the consultation process and will consider the responses prior to finalising the report to the Cabinet Secretary.

Membership

Director for Wales – National Trust – Chair

Director, Culture, Sport and Tourism – Welsh Government

Chief Executive and Board representative – Amgueddfa Cymru — National Museum Wales

Chief Executive and Board representative – National Library of Wales

Chief Executive – Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW)

National Officers – PCS, Prospect, FDA

TUS (Chair) – Welsh Government

Director of Corporate Services – Welsh Government

Deputy Director – Cadw/Museums, Archives and Library Division – Welsh Government

Deputy Director – Cadw (Commercial and Property) – Welsh Government

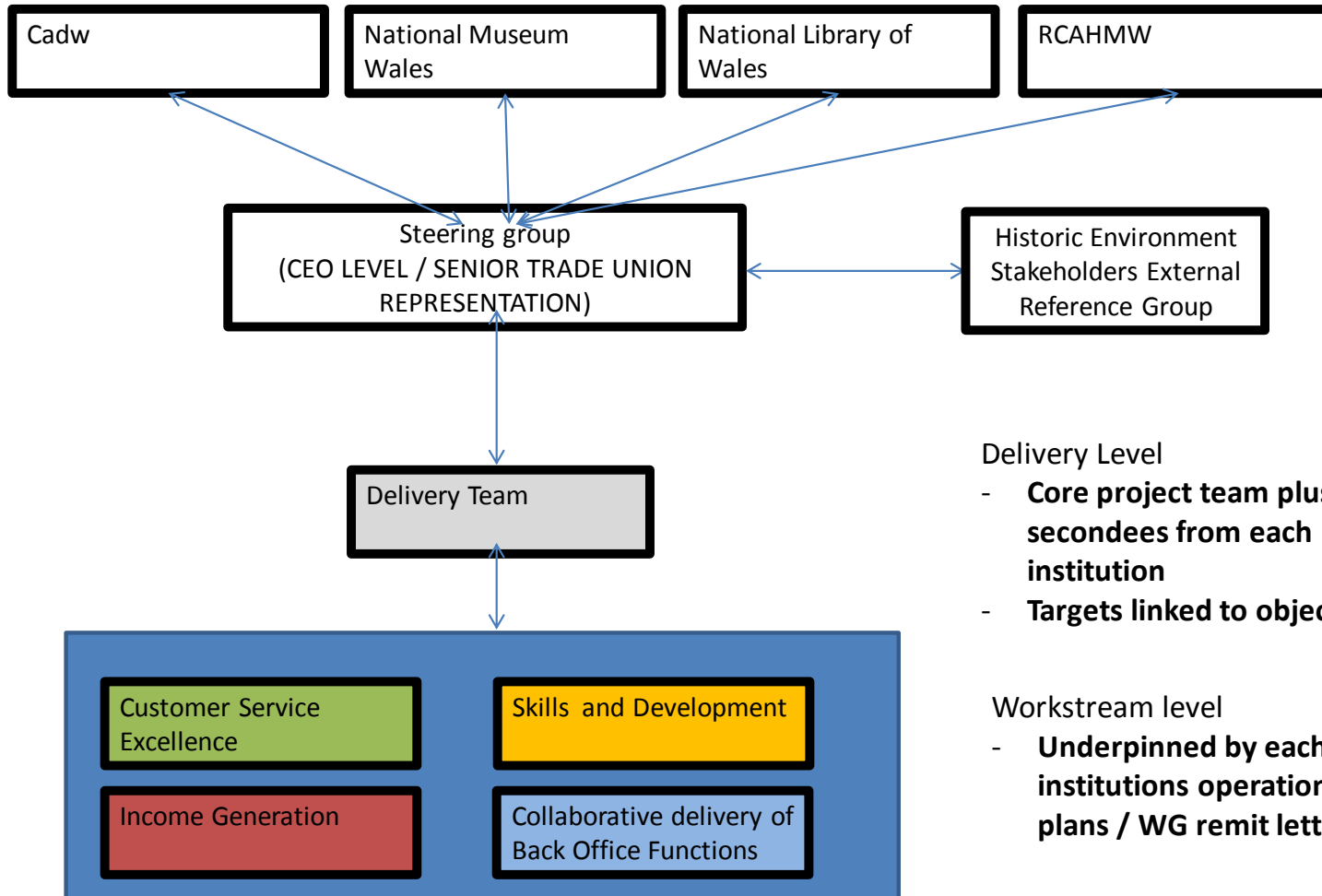
Supported by

Legal and functional specialists

Secretariat provided by Welsh Government

Independent – Director of Development (National Trust)

APPENDIX 2: STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP – ORGANOGRAM



Delivery Level

- **Core project team plus secondees from each institution**
- **Targets linked to objectives**

Workstream level

- **Underpinned by each institutions operational plans / WG remit letters**

APPENDIX 3

1. **CADW: A NEW NATIONAL INSTITUTION FOR WALES OUTSIDE**

GOVERNMENT. It is proposed that Cadw should become either a charitable body, or an executive agency, outside of government, based on a business case to identify the best option.

The PwC report recommended a new model for Cadw as a body outside of Government (PwC Options 2 and 3). The PwC Report also identified opportunities for greater and more formal collaboration between the national institutions and Cadw, and the creation of Cadw as a new charity (combination of PwC Options 1 and 2). The PwC report identified a number of possible benefits from Cadw as a new charity, including the opportunity to get additional income from Lotteries, commercial sponsorship and other fundraising, as well as the recovery of VAT. The report also highlighted some of the challenges, such as the requirement for legislation and complex issues relating to charity law.

A combination of PwC Options 1 and 3 identified greater and more formal collaboration between the national organisations, together with a new model for Cadw outside Government as a Government Agency but with staff still members of the Civil Service, or with analogued Terms and Conditions. The combination of PwC Options 1 and 3 would enable the early establishment of Cadw as a separate body.

Outcomes delivered: A more successful, resilient and sustainable future for Cadw. Greater opportunities and increased income and profit for other national institutions through working in partnership with Cadw as a sister organisation.

2. **SPONSORSHIP AND STATUTORY DUTIES.** Changing the status of Cadw will require a review of Welsh Government arrangements for the exercise of its statutory duties and sponsorship responsibilities. This could be achieved by the creation of a new heritage division within Government that will include oversight (through budget setting, remit letters and operational plans) of the historic environment as well as museums, archives and libraries, thus facilitating skills, expertise and workforce development on a pan-Wales basis.

This Division would be constituted to serve as a vehicle for the development of pan-Wales policies, as well as the delivery of social benefits derived from heritage and culture across Welsh Government departments - including research, education, conservation, community engagement, access and inclusion. The Division could also play a key role in terms of the heritage sector workforce development.

Outcomes delivered: Greater public participation in heritage and cultural services, with an emphasis on increasing income generation and profit, as well as widening access and deepening participation, for example through the Fusion programme. A skilled workforce with greater job opportunities.

3. **WORKING TOGETHER: A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP.** The senior executives of the three national institutions and Cadw, supported by full trade union engagement will form a Strategic Partnership and a formal agreement – underpinned by remit letters to the national institutions - to achieve its goals.

The Recommendations contained in this report will form the basis of a formal written agreement between the partners with partnership agreements and Memorandum of Understanding around specific collaborations. The four partners will commit to work together to develop partnership initiatives for which there is a business case, and to jointly bid to Welsh Government and other funding sources where possible to take forward new initiatives.

The objective of these plans will be to significantly increase the number of tourists to the nation's museums and heritage sites. This, in turn, will increase income and profit for the four partner institutions – and for Wales as a whole – to support investment in further development.

Outcomes delivered: Effective strategic partnerships between the four national cultural heritage institutions. Increased income and profit for individual institutions, and increased tourist spend in Wales.

- 4. COLLABORATIVE DELIVERY OF COMMERCIAL FUNCTIONS:** The Strategic Partnership will collaborate to improve all commercial revenue streams where feasible and appropriate, including but not limited to: retail (including online), food and beverages, and venue hire.

The PwC report identified potential opportunities for a more collaborative approach to delivery of specific commercial functions required to improve performance and extend usage.

There is potential for collaboration and partnerships on retail, food and beverages, online commerce and venue hire. The PwC report suggested as one option that Amgueddfa Cymru's Enterprises Company might be used to facilitate collaboration. The Company's Board includes highly knowledgeable private sector leaders with experience in high street retail, visitor attractions, food and catering and online commerce, whose expertise could be invaluable.

Outcomes delivered: Development of strong and effective partnerships. Best practice in delivery of commercial services jointly developed and shared between the national institutions. Increased income and profit for individual institutions. Potential for greater synergies and better use of buildings and other assets.

- 5. COLLABORATIVE DELIVERY OF BACK OFFICE FUNCTIONS.** The Strategic Partnership will investigate the potential for collaborative delivery – while protecting jobs and expertise - of back office functions including HR and IT systems, policies and procedures.

The centrally managed procurement framework for public services, the National Procurement Service, provides opportunities for collaboration – for example the joint commissioning of legal and audit services already occur between Amgueddfa Cymru and the National Library of Wales. The National Library of Wales recently took over responsibility for the Commission's payroll management and the co-location of the Commission at the National Library of Wales has provided both financial and service benefits to both organisations.

Outcomes delivered: Potential for savings through economies of scale, while protecting jobs and expertise.

6. **CULTURAL TOURISM.** Joint marketing of national campaigns and events, possibly through a 'Historic Wales' brand, working within and as part of a wider 'Visit Wales' brand to build on the success of recent campaigns and cultural tourism initiatives.

After a number of successful years selling Wales to the world, there is now an opportunity to build on this success and to achieve significant growth in the number of visitors from beyond Wales' borders, specifically linked to cultural tourism. Whilst Visit Wales should continue to lead on this work, all four national institutions should remain key strategic partners in taking this forward, alongside other stakeholders such as the National Trust, Historic Houses Association, Welsh Archaeological Trusts, Natural Resources Wales, Glandwr Cymru and the Welsh National Parks.

A potential significant project could be to develop a 'Warm Welsh Welcome' at heritage sites across Wales. This could improve participating organisations' capacity to provide a better visitor service as well as a consistent, authentic and memorable experience for visitors to Wales. Another partnership project might be a Citizen's Heritage Card for Wales, with an offer developed in collaboration between institutions. This could be supported by a heritage magazine or even comic, featuring content by each institution.

Outcomes delivered: Increase in visitors to Wales who are engaged with culture and heritage, with consequent increased income for Wales and profit for cultural and heritage organisations. Better marketing of Wales' heritage and improvement in the quality of service offered.

7. **DEVELOPMENT OF BLAENAVON WORLD HERITAGE SITE.** The Strategic Partnership (alongside Torfaen local authority and Visit Wales) will pilot a more collaborative partnership model at the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site to enhance and promote existing and potential UNESCO sites in Wales and other heritage tourism hotspots.

Some World Heritage Sites and other cultural hotspots of Wales have significant unfulfilled potential as tourist attractions. The national cultural institutions could play a more active and strategic role in their promotion. The pilot would focus on the promotion of Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site. It could comprise a Strategic Partnership between Cadw, Amgueddfa Cymru and the relevant local authorities (principally Torfaen) to coordinate the joint marketing and events at the sites. The principle of collaborative action is already established at Caerleon, where Amgueddfa Cymru provides education services to all schools visiting the historic sites managed by Cadw as well as the National Roman Legion Museum.

Outcomes delivered: Greater collaboration between participating institutions. Increased income generation and profit for individual bodies, and increased tourist spend in Wales.

8. **A CULTURAL SECTOR SKILLS STRATEGY.** The Strategic Partnership and the Museums, Archives and Libraries Division of Welsh Government, in collaboration with other stakeholders, will lead on the development of a skills strategy to enhance workplace opportunities for staff in the culture and heritage sector in Wales.

There are many areas of professional specialisms which are at risk in the context of declining public sector funding. This agenda extends beyond the national organisations into local authority and third sector organisations. The development of partnerships by national institutions provides an opportunity to develop a shared workplace development strategy to enable shared training programmes, placements, internships, apprentices and volunteering opportunities to maintain and develop professional skills and competences.

There are also opportunities to build on the recommendations of the Edwards Review of Local Museums, to link professional skills between the Amgueddfa Cymru and local museums.

Outcomes delivered: A skilled workforce with wider job opportunities. Greater public participation in heritage and cultural services, with an emphasis on widening access and deepening participation, including the Fusion programme.



Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref

Justin Albert

justin.albert@nationaltrust.org.uk

30 March 2017

Dear *Justin*

Historic Wales – A roadmap towards Success, Resilience and Sustainability for the Heritage of Wales

I was delighted to receive the report: Historic Wales – A roadmap towards Success, Resilience and Sustainability for the Heritage of Wales on 2 February and have considered its content with great interest.

Firstly, I would like to record my thanks to you for your work as the Chair of the group, and to each of the institutions, trade unions and my officials for working so constructively together to produce such a measured and well-considered report. I am heartened that the suite of recommendations has been produced with the agreement and consensus of all the organisations involved and am excited about the opportunities that they will create for the benefit of the sector as a whole when they are delivered.

The nine recommendations fall into two broad themes:

- The future of Cadw
- The establishment of a Strategic Partnership and its future work programme

and I have set out my views on each of these below:

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

1. The future of Cadw

Recommendation 4.1 proposes a new national institution for Wales outside of Government. Cadw's core role is to conserve our national heritage and make it available for our current and future generations and it should be very proud of its achievements, particularly in recent years. Cadw is performing exceptionally at the moment whilst being in Government, and I want to ensure that success continues. My aim is to allow the organisation as much freedom and flexibility as possible to enable it to fully realise its commercial potential and also build on its very impressive improvement to the visitor experience and increase in visitor numbers and membership. I therefore believe it is timely to assess whether the existing governance arrangements are truly helping Cadw fulfill its potential, as there could be potential benefits of moving the organisation to a more arms-length status. This could enable Cadw to adopt an even more commercially focused approach to support the vital work that needs to be done to continue to maintain and protect the heritage of Wales, as well as provide greater scope for Cadw to work in partnership with other institutions.

That said, I would not, at this stage, want to focus simply on the two options identified in the report. Whilst an executive agency or a charitable body are two clear options, there are others such as an internal realignment or Welsh Government Sponsored Body and I would therefore like the business case to identify and explore the whole range of options available before being narrowed down to a preferred option. It is imperative that we test all options thoroughly against the status quo of retaining Cadw within Government. There will need to be clear and demonstrable benefits for proposing any change.

Recommendation 4.2 follows on from Recommendation 4.1 and the preferred model for the future of Cadw will dictate how this recommendation is taken forward. Cadw's statutory duties, in particular, are fundamental to the conservation of our national heritage and the importance of these functions, along with the provision of advice and guidance to owners of historic assets should not be diluted by any change to the status of the organisation. I will expect this to form part of the development of the business case for recommendation 4.1.

I accept both these recommendations with the caveats detailed above and will ensure resources are identified within the Welsh Government to take these forward with full staff and trade union engagement.

2. Strategic Partnership

I am excited by the recommendations for much greater collaboration between our leading heritage institutions and the vision for the partnership of a more coherent and joined up heritage sector. We face a number of challenges ahead, not least maintaining and protecting the heritage of Wales when public finances are under severe pressure. I believe that part of the answer to these challenges lies in the establishment of such a partnership. The steering group has convinced me that the recommendations highlight a real opportunity to bring a sharper focus and clearer identity to the commercial work of our national institutions and that it is right that we test these opportunities and evaluate their impact before exploring whether a formal merger may be effective. Bringing commercial functions closer together will not undermine the independence or identity of the individual institutions. Rather, it will enable them to build on the strengths of each organisation and share that expertise for the benefit of the sector as a whole. But I need to be clear: now is the time for each of our national organisations to start realising their full commercial potential and to provide the leadership necessary to bring a much sharper commercial focus to the work they do. I will be monitoring the progress of the strategic partnership closely.

Recommendations 4.3 to 4.7 are at the heart of my own vision. We have to find new ways for our heritage and cultural institutions to innovate and be ambitious about the role they play in our national life, working together to form a compelling vision of that future.

We also have to increase the number of people using our heritage and cultural institutions and develop novel ways to attract new audiences. By working together more closely and marketing and promoting our cultural and heritage institutions more vigorously and effectively it will create wider opportunities to open up all our sites to families and younger people in a way we never have before.

Recommendation 4.8 sits well alongside these activities. The skills, passion and expertise of people working in our institutions, bring them to life just as much as the cultural assets that they contain. We need to give greater respect and recognition to these people, and those working in the wider sector and offer them greater opportunities for them to develop their careers in the field and we need to retain our staff to conserve, protect and interpret our inheritance for future generations.

Lastly, I recognise that Recommendation 4.9 touches on an important issue Cadw and the other national institutions are well known and respected brands and whilst 'Historic Wales' has been a working title for this significant initiative, I agree that it should be tested, alongside alternatives, before any changes are implemented. Whatever the outcome, I want to see a strong brand that represents the sector and will enable it to market our world-class cultural assets more effectively, not just to the people of Wales but to the world stage.

I accept all of these recommendations relating to the Strategic Partnership. In order to sustain an equal partnership approach, I recognise, as outlined in Recommendation 4.3, that a formal agreement is needed and this approach has my full support. The Welsh Government will play its part in supporting and contributing to the partnership but I believe, in order for it to reach its full potential, it needs to be led and driven by the institutions involved, with their adequate resources put behind it. I therefore look forward to discussing the vision for the establishment of the Strategic Partnership and its forward work programme with the national institutions at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely

*Very best wishes,
Ken*

Ken Skates AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure

Agenda Item 3

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Cyfieithiad i'r Saesneg gan Gomisiwn y
Cynulliad

English Translation by Assembly
Commission

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Agenda Item 4

Cynllun Cenedlaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales

Pwyllgor Diwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chyfathrebu / The Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

Newyddiaduraeth Newyddion yng Nghymru / News Journalism in Wales

CWLC(5) NJW05

Ymateb gan NUJ Cymru / Evidence from NUJ Wales

1. The National Union of Journalists welcomes the committee's inquiry into what the union believes is a crisis in news provision in Wales. In its media manifesto for Wales, the NUJ called for a publicly-owned, fee-funded BBC and greater oversight and scrutiny of public service broadcasting in Wales by the Welsh Government and Assembly, plus a vibrant and properly-resourced S4C funded and managed in Wales. ITV in Wales must be committed to public-service provision of news and current affairs and play a central role in shining a light on Welsh life.
2. The union would like to express thanks for the Assembly's support during the union's Local News Matters Week, including a statement of opinion (OPIN-2017-0033 - Local News Matters Week) which called for local papers to be treated as community assets; new rules to prevent local media outlets from closing overnight - they should be offered to potential new owners, including local co-operatives, with the time available to submit a bid for alternative media ownership in advance of any closure; action by government and employers to stem the relentless job cuts; and increasing investment, from a range of sources, for quality local journalism.
3. The NUJ Welsh manifesto reported a crisis in the media in Wales with cuts to journalist posts which has resulted in less coverage of democratic institutions. It said: "A Wales where government operates, unreported and unchallenged, is a weaker Wales. A Wales where courts pass judgements that affect individuals and society as a whole, untroubled by the critical presence of the press, is a weaker Wales. A Wales where sporting triumph, eisteddfodau crowning or community campaigning goes unheralded is a weaker Wales."
4. The decline of advertising revenue, the move from print to digital, with newspaper groups making their websites free and then increasing the cover price of newspapers has had a deleterious effect on circulation. This is a worldwide phenomenon and it can be argued that Welsh news provision has been particularly hard hit by this trend. While digital traffic is growing, the advertising revenue is not following. According to the News Media Association the revenue of the vast majority of media organisations (81 per cent) comes from print readership, with 12 per cent from digital. These organisations have

squandered the opportunity to invest in digital. Instead, they have used it to cut jobs. These media organisations have largely run a model which expects more than 20 per cent profits, almost unheard of in other sectors. As the profits were squeezed (and they spent unwisely when the going was good), their only tool to appease shareholders was to cut staff without due care for the quality of the product they were producing. The media behemoths such as Facebook and Google are sucking up advertising and hoovering up content from media news organisations. A report by OC&C Strategy Consultants forecasts Facebook and Google will take a 71 per cent share of the total ad market by 2020. Their report stated: “The scale and speed is really a call to action for media companies. By the time [Facebook and Google] get to 70 per cent of the online ad market, that doesn’t leave a lot of space left elsewhere.” The Assembly should use its influence to see how Google and the like can be persuaded to aid start-up ventures in Wales.

5. The Assembly can play a vital role in looking at ways to increasing investment in quality journalism. The NUJ has called for the strategic use of central and local government advertising and tax credits and tax breaks for local media that meet clearly defined public purposes.
6. The sorry story of the closure of Newsquest's subbing hub in Newport is a salutary tale of where investment by the Welsh government in journalism was sorely misplaced. The hub, which once employed 70 people, edited copy for newspapers as far away as Scotland after production staff were sacked on Newsquest's titles. The Welsh government paid Newsquest, owned by the highly profitable American company Gannett, £340,000 to set up the hub. The grant came, apparently, with the proviso that workers were employed until at least 2020. Newsquest reported a 20 per cent profit of £69m on turnover of £279m in the year it received this Welsh government handout. The Welsh Government confirmed Newsquest also received support under the Skills Growth Wales programme in 2013/2014, of more than £95,000. The hub has now closed with the remaining 14 staff losing their jobs.
7. The lesson of the Newport debacle is that a more strategic approach is required. The Port Talbot Magnet, a not-for-profit community co-operative, was set up seven years ago with a £10,000 grant from the Carnegie Trust. Despite breaking many stories and being popular with readers, the economic pressures on all businesses in Port Talbot following the steel crisis made it

impossible to support a local news service through advertising alone and in September 2016 the paper was closed. This is exactly the sort of enterprise that should have been supported. Grants should be made available to start-up media enterprises and the Assembly should be encouraging councils and other public bodies to support them by advertising and sponsorship.

8. The NUJ believes newspapers should be given the status of community assets with new rules to prevent local media outlets from closing overnight and allowing titles to be offered to potential new owners, including local co-operatives, with the time available to submit a bid for alternative media ownership in advance of any closure.
9. Trinity Mirror's Media Wales is the most prominent local news publisher, owning the daily Western Mail, Daily Post and South Wales Echo and a stable of more than 10 weekly publications covering areas in both south and north Wales. Trinity Mirror has taken over Local World titles of the daily South Wales Evening Post and two weekly titles – the Carmarthen Journal and Llanelli Star. This has led to the merger of the Swansea-based South Wales Evening Post website with its Wales Online platform. In 1999 there were almost 700 editorial and production staff at Media Wales. At the end of 2015 Media Wales employed 100 production staff, plus 57 in sales and distribution and 11 in administrative roles. Trinity Mirror makes no secret of its practice of cutting what it describes as "traditional roles" and replacing them with more digitally-focused roles. The NUJ is concerned that this is leading to a loss of reporting specialists who are experts in their field. Trinity Mirror's business model is based on increasing the number of visitors to its websites, and the concern is that this is leading to a greater emphasis on lighter, lifestyle-type material at the expense of more traditional coverage of councils. With greatly-slimmed down newsrooms, our members have noticed acceleration in this trend, which is very worrying in the context of wanting a better-informed electorate.
10. People are doing their best with ever-diminished resources, but it becomes increasingly difficult. However, due to the dedication of our members and the long hours they put in, quality journalism still exists, for example the widely-praised coverage of the Aberfan Disaster around its 50th anniversary last October.
11. Last year, NUJ members at Trinity Mirror North Wales voted to ballot for industrial action over the company's plans which moved Daily Post's political

reporter to North Wales, resulting in no specialist based in Cardiff covering the Welsh Assembly. The plans resulted in unfilled roles, including the newspaper's executive editor, and the abolition of one digital reporter. This followed two former Daily Post reporters being transferred within Trinity Mirror and not being replaced.

12. As part of the BBC's local democracy reporters' (LDRs) scheme, which is using £8m of licence-fee payers' money to fund reporters to work for commercially-owned local newspapers covering councils, Wales has been given an allocation of 11 so-called LDRs. During correspondence with Welsh Assembly AM Simon Thomas over the sacking of the Daily Post's political correspondent covering the Assembly from Cardiff, Trinity Mirror's CEO, Simon Fox, said: "It is worth you knowing that we remain in discussions with the BBC about synergistic working. It may be, emerging from this, that further improvements to our political coverage may be possible." The NUJ needs to have assurances that vacancies are not plugged by these LDRs. This would be a very cynical use of the scheme.
13. Journalists at the Daily Post discovered their office was closing in a press release from Lidl supermarket, which is planning to take over the site for redevelopment. The newspaper staff is to move to new facilities five miles away in Colwyn Bay later this year after 16 years at its office in Vale Road, Llandudno Junction, Wales. The title has an average daily circulation of 21,802 copies and records 99,963 unique daily visitors to its website, according to the latest ABC figures. The Post team will share space with staff on the North Wales Weekly News, the Caernarfon and Denbigh Herald and the Bangor and Holyhead Mail series in the new office – making up about 30 journalists in all. The Press Gazette said the staff had not been consulted and knew nothing about it until they read the Lidl press release.
14. There are substantial Welsh towns that do not have a local newspaper or professional journalists covering them, such as Neath and Port Talbot (combined population 88,000) since their newspapers were closed by Trinity Mirror in 2009. The population of Neath-Port Talbot county borough, the eighth largest local authority in Wales, was 141,000, according to the 2011 census.
15. In April 2015, more than 100 people, including council leaders and local MPs gathered at Turf Square, Caernarfon, to protest against Trinity Mirror's

proposal to close its Caernarfon office. Once dubbed the Welsh capital of ink, Caernarfon had long been associated with journalism and the Caernarfon and Denbigh Herald has existed in various guises since 1831. The chapel said it would also take journalists further away from the communities they are meant to serve and would affect the Welsh language service the company would be able to offer customers and readers should the office close.

16. The NUJ has been reporting problems in the industry in Wales for some time. Michelle Stanistreet, NUJ general secretary, told the All Party Parliamentary Group on the media in Wales in July 2012: "As local newspaper groups are bought up by large conglomerates with headquarters in London and the USA, Welsh newspapers have found they are losing their distinctive voice. The industry is being hit by the UK and worldwide crisis – in the past seven years, 20 per cent of the UK's local papers have closed with only 70 new launches. The blame has been put on the transition to the internet with a lot of content being made free, the drop in advertising revenue caused by the recession and falling circulations. But it is not as simple as that. Between the start of 2003 and the end of 2007, Media Wales's profit margins averaged 34 per cent, peaking at 38 per cent for the 12 months to the end of 2005. These profits made Media Wales one of the most profitable companies in Wales of any kind, let alone in the media industry. But these profits were not invested in the business. When Sly Bailey, Trinity Mirror's chief executive, left the group, she had pocketed more than £14 million, despite the workforce being cut by a half and a share price that plummeted by 90 per cent during her tenure."
17. A common response of owners such as Trinity Mirror is to point to their substantial gains in digital audience share, but this belies the loss of journalists and their experience and the resulting loss of local community coverage as newsrooms have become centralised. Print newspapers remain important resources for many communities, but more important are the journalists they employ and the duties they have in proving information and the scrutiny they provide in the service of local democracy. Recent research into the impact of so-called 'news black holes' on audiences has recently been carried out at Cardiff University. The study examined the town of Port Talbot following the 2009 closure of its weekly newspaper, the Port Talbot Guardian. Its findings included:

- Local people were heavily reliant on word of mouth for their news, meaning rumour and speculation were key features of any public debate or discussion.
- Local institutions were opaque and it was difficult for members of the public to navigate them, to obtain information, get answers to their queries, or complain.
- People were falling back on unconventional means to obtain information, including protest graffiti.
- Frustration and anger was common and it was most marked in the youngest members of the community. They spoke at length about their willingness to riot to make their voices heard.
- News provision by traditional media had been diminishing in quality for many decades as resources were withdrawn from newsrooms, but important markers of quality deteriorated more rapidly when journalists were dislocated from their communities at the closure of the last two local newspaper district offices.
- A significant finding was that election turnout averages in council, Welsh Assembly and general elections, which had historically been above national averages in the local Aberavon constituency, fell and subsequently remained below the national average around the time of the closure of the newspapers' district offices. This suggests in stark terms the likelihood of a serious democratic deficit following the withdrawal of local print journalists from the community.

18. In November, 2016 Trinity Mirror announced the closure of its Cardiff printing press with 33 jobs affected.

19. There have been more than 100 job cuts at BBC Wales since 2012, with £10m slashed from programming budgets in the same period. Investment in English language programming has fallen by 32 per cent in real terms in the past decade. Despite this, the BBC in Wales continues to play a central role in the lives of the people of Wales. BBC Wales has two reporters and a producer covering Westminster.

20. Funding for S4C has been cut by £18.2m since 2009. Its Newyddion 9 news bulletin is watched by 18,000 viewers per episode while the political debate programme Pawb a'i Farn attracts 13,000 viewers per episode. S4C regularly attracted audiences of above 20,000 for eisteddfodau coverage in 2014/15.
21. There is no published separate budget for ITV Cymru Wales, though estimates based on Ofcom sources put it at about £7 million. The overall budget for all ITV's English regional and Welsh output is £64 million, down from more than £100 million and now frozen in cash terms. The gap between the programme makers' ambition and their financial resources is sometimes apparent, for example ITV Cymru Wales rugby world cup programmes lacked pitch-side presentation, unlike ITV network (and S4C).
22. About 10 years ago in north Wales, the BBC's online offering was being served by a dedicated news service and a magazine operation, in the guise of the Where I Live teams. BBC Bangor and BBC Wrexham each had a producer, researcher and news reporter dedicated to serving the north-west Wales and north-east Wales regions. These services were put to the sword in a reorganisation prompted by complaints of the newspaper industry that the BBC was over-stepping its remit and hitting local newspapers. It resulted in one producer role in north Wales merging into the general news online services, along with the two reporters. The researcher posts were lost entirely, while another producer took voluntary redundancy. The Where I Live sites were closed and local news need was supposed to be met by the regional news indexes.
23. The English language News Online in north Wales is now covered by three posts – half the number of 10 years ago. But not a single member of this north Wales online team is dedicated to covering north Wales's stories. They are in the general online shift mix, working rotas to maintain the site and stories from a Wales-wide perspective.
24. Reorganisation of BBC Wales services to meet complaints from the newspaper industry has worsened that position, while the response of the newspaper industry was not to invest in the perceived local hole being left by the BBC – but to accelerate cuts to its local reporting. But, should public bodies, such as the BBC, be investing licence-fee cash in the private sector, rather than back into its own local services? Recent history of local newspaper investment in its own local journalism in north Wales does not bode confidence.

25. Lack of media plurality is a major problem in the press in the UK. Research commissioned by the NUJ revealed that 45 per cent of 380 Local Authority Districts in England, Scotland and Wales were served by a single regional newspaper publisher providing one or more titles. Therefore, the UK regional newspaper market contained 165 local monopolies. Analysis of local newspaper digital output also found that lack of plurality was often not affected when online news provision by regional titles was taken into account.

- Mapping changes in local news 2015–2017: more bad news for democracy? Dr Gordon Neil Ramsay, deputy director for the centre for the study of media, communication and power at King's College London
<https://www.nuj.org.uk/documents/mapping-changes-local-news-2017/>
- Journey to the centre of a news black hole: examining the democratic deficit in a town with no newspaper, Rachel Howells
<https://www.nuj.org.uk/documents/journey-to-the-centre-of-a-news-black-hole-examining-the/>

I am a journalist, academic and trade unionist with almost twenty years' experience in journalism. Most recently I was a founder director and editor of the *Port Talbot Magnet* news service, which operated in Port Talbot from 2010, but which is currently in the process of closing, primarily in the face of advertising revenue decline. I also have a doctorate gained in 2016 from Cardiff University's Journalism school. The focus of my PhD research was the democratic deficit in towns that lose their local newspaper, with Port Talbot as my case study. I would therefore like to submit evidence to the committee in two separate, but related, strands:

- 1) My experience of running a successful hyperlocal news service
- 2) The results of my PhD research into news black holes and the democratic deficit

1. The Port Talbot Magnet

The *Magnet* started life at the end of 2009, a proactive response by the local branch of the NUJ to a series of redundancies at the *South Wales Evening Post* and other cuts. We recognised a crisis in our local journalism industry and we established a workers' co-operative for our members. Shortly afterwards, Trinity Mirror announced the closure of two long-standing weekly newspapers in neighbouring Neath and Port Talbot. We were keen to try to fill the gap left by these newspapers. With help and support from the Wales Co-operative Centre, the *Port Talbot Magnet* was born.

Much of the first year of the project was spent filling in forms in the hope of gaining grant funding for the *Magnet*. This proved to be fruitless. A number of meetings with Welsh Government ministers showed there was moral support for our plans, but no money. Several grant applications to funders including the Big Lottery and the Coal Regeneration Trust came to nothing. Much of the advice we were given revolved around us changing our plans. We hoped to establish good quality fourth estate local journalism for the whole town, but we were advised many times that we could gain access to funding if, instead, we provided training or worked with disadvantaged people. Though both these strands were incorporated into our plans, they were very much secondary to our desire to

provide good quality journalism and scrutiny for Port Talbot, and we did not feel it was helpful to compromise on these ideals.

By then, four of the seven founders were in employment elsewhere, three in PR and one in radio journalism. Of the remaining three, two were retired, and I – the other – was able to apply to Cardiff University to undertake a funded PhD.

Successes

Around the end of 2010 we decided to stop pursuing grant funding and instead focus on our core aim to produce a local news website. Our first success came in the shape of the National Theatre Wales production *The Passion*, which took place over Easter 2011. We were a community partner of the production, and were the only news service to follow the production from its first call for participants to full live coverage of the three-day play, and a year later produced our first publication in print – a souvenir programme for the *Passion: Memory* event that happened in 2012, funded by advertising.

In 2013 we successfully applied to Carnegie UK for £10,000 under their Neighbourhood News scheme. This funding enabled the launch of our tabloid newspaper, which was delivered quarterly to 20,000 homes in Port Talbot. Residents responded enthusiastically to our newspaper, and the *Magnet's* name became well-known in the town. Many businesses supported us by advertising and the website and social media channels gained thousands of likes, shares and followers, with many of our online stories being read by 5–6,000 people. We were also shortlisted in the Wales Media Awards as the Community News Service of the year in 2015, and many of our stories were picked up by other media outlets. We were also successful in campaigning, becoming a trusted voice for local people about important and contentious issues.

But...

We are proud of the *Magnet's* success but it is important to acknowledge that the news service was never sustainable, for the following reasons:

- We were not able to offer consistent pay or contracts to the people who worked for us. Most of the people who made the *Magnet* possible did so as volunteers. Our freelancers often charged less than the going rate, or put in a proportion of their time for free in order to support us.

- Sales staff were incredibly difficult to find as we were not able to fund the incentives that would normally be expected. Our first ad sales rep scammed us out of several hundred pounds; our second worked amazingly hard and brought in revenues but stress made her very ill; and our third had to take a second job as a supermarket delivery driver to top up his commission.
- We reluctantly concluded that there was insufficient wealth in the local economy in Port Talbot to support a news service. Many of our advertisers were not able to spend money regularly, or were not able to pay our rates, even reduced to cost prices.
- Online advertising revenues were not enough to sustain us. The newspaper brought in revenues of between £2.5k and £5k per edition. The website, in the entire seven years it ran, brought in £1.5k – an average of £215 per year, not even enough to cover our insurance bill. We found advertisers far preferred the hard copy newspaper.
- Volunteers were difficult to find and a burden to manage, support and train. Volunteers were plentiful at first, but sustaining their numbers became increasingly difficult.
- Engaging with public bodies was difficult. It took five years of nagging for South Wales Police to add us to their mailing list. We made several requests to the BBC for them to link to us as a news provider but we did not receive a reply. There was no systematic way to approach schools – each had its own system and a different policy for dealing with the media. The local council took a long time to add us to their mailing list for press releases, and often took days or weeks to respond to queries. Only latterly were we invited to openings such as the new superschool at Baglan. The local college did not engage with us. Tata Steel were very reluctant to engage with us until the last months of 2016. We felt the door of institutions was usually closed to us, and it took many repeated requests for it to be – reluctantly – opened, and often only to a narrow, one-off, crack. We found most public bodies and businesses only acknowledged our requests and took us seriously after we had written critically about them.

The end...

The crisis in the local steel industry was what eventually took its toll on our already precarious news service. From January 2016, when the first job cuts at the

steelworks were announced, our advertising revenue halved, and unfortunately it never recovered. This is understandable, as business is precarious for many small businesses in Port Talbot. Tata had never advertised with us, but many families in Port Talbot are affected by the steelworks' fortunes. One café owner who had regularly advertised with us, told us she could no longer do so, as she feared for her business since many of her customers worked at the steelworks, and so did her husband. Had the works closed, she knew her own income stream would be damaged and her husband's would vanish.

We worked for most of 2016 without pay in the hope things would change. In this time we broke an important story about the safety concerns of workers following the reductions in manpower on shifts because of the redundancies. This story was not picked up in the mainstream press. It caused some in the trade unions to try to uncover the identities of the whistleblowers by underhand tactics, and it caused our team to be harassed by steelworkers. We did not have the institutional muscle and legal advice we needed, and we felt exposed and stressed. This was certainly a contributory factor in our closure, but at the root of all our problems was the lack of a reliable income stream.

2. The democratic deficit in towns with no newspaper

In conjunction with my work at the *Magnet*, I also researched the news black hole in Port Talbot following the 2009 closure of the *Port Talbot Guardian*.

Methodology

My research was funded by the Welsh Government's KESS fund, the Media Standards Trust and Cardiff University and used five methods:

- i. I analysed a large sample of local newspaper stories published between 1970 and 2015 by the two main Port Talbot newspapers, the weekly *Port Talbot Guardian* and the regional daily, the *South Wales Evening Post*. This enabled a long-term historical analysis of the change in news content and quantity over time.
- ii. I interviewed 11 local news journalists who had worked as reporters or subeditors on the Port Talbot patch between these dates about their jobs and how the nature of newsgathering had changed in that time.
- iii. I surveyed 364 residents about their news reading habits and their knowledge of current issues and politics in Port Talbot.

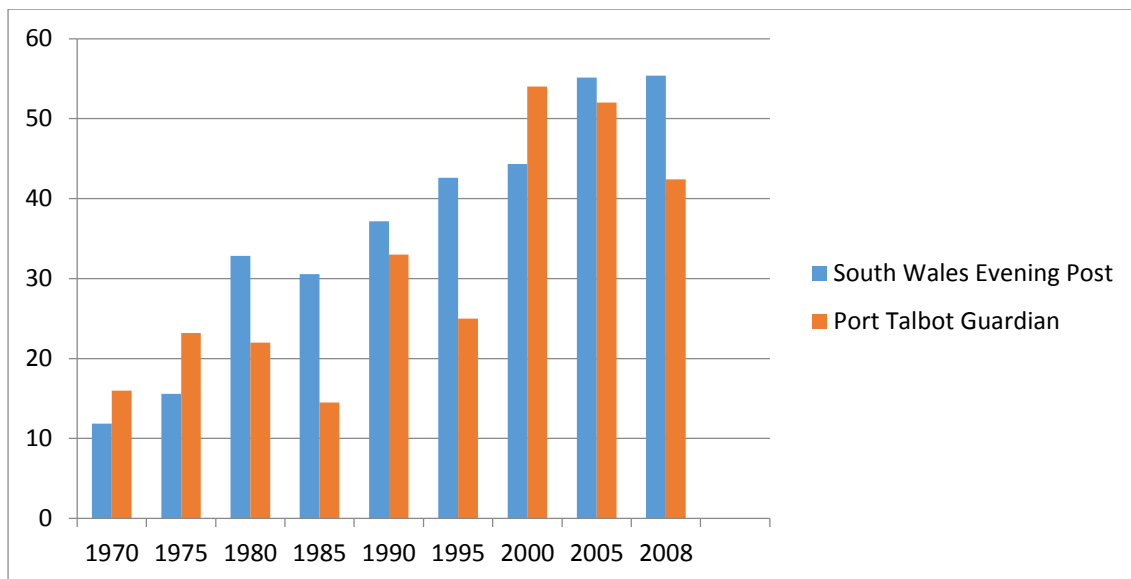
- iv. I carried out four focus groups to determine how local people were accessing essential information and gaining representation post–newspaper–closure.
- v. I analysed documentary evidence, statistics and polls from the sample period to gain a deeper understanding of any changes in engagement and civic and democratic behaviour by Port Talbot residents.

Declines and cuts

The declines in newspaper circulations and revenues are well documented and I will not repeat them here. At a local level, declines have resulted in a contraction of newsrooms, with staff numbers at Trinity Mirror and the former Local World/ Northcliffe dropping by 60–90 per cent in Wales in the last two decades (Howells, 2016).

In Port Talbot, I established that, in 1970, five newspapers employed 11 reporters between them, based in offices in the town itself. Now, there are none. The *South Wales Evening Post* employs one reporter, based in Swansea, to cover the Neath Port Talbot patch, and to write the daily stories for the Neath Port Talbot edition as well as filling the weekly *Neath Port Talbot Courier* insert. Even as recently as 2010, there were four reporters employed by the *Post* to cover this patch, constituting a 75 per cent drop in this element of the workforce.

Alongside these cuts, workloads have increased. Graph 1 shows how paginations of both the *Port Talbot Guardian* and the *Post* increased over time. Additionally reporters are now expected to provide breaking news online and to post and respond to social media.



Graph 1: Average pagination of the South Wales Evening Post and Port Talbot Guardian

The closure of district offices has also been a blow. Reporters from the 1960s to the 1980s describe offices operated by both the *Guardian* and the *Post* which were open to the public and in which three or four members of staff were the norm. Reporters were able to leave the office regularly to uncover, investigate or report on nearby stories. The offices were credited with being a source of news stories, a way to filter out those with “a bee in their bonnet” (1990s–2000s *Post* reporter) and an important and regular point of contact between the journalists and the communities they served.

These closures and other cuts and structural changes in newsrooms have resulted in:

- The power of rivalry and competition between newspapers becoming diminished, and fewer voices, angles or issues being covered
- Journalists becoming more office-bound and less visible to the community, also more reliant on press officers as sources rather than being on the scene
- Reporters’ main focus becoming about “filling shapes” (templates on a pre-designed page) and getting through a large volume of work each shift
- Local communities having less access to journalists, and less leverage in getting their voices heard

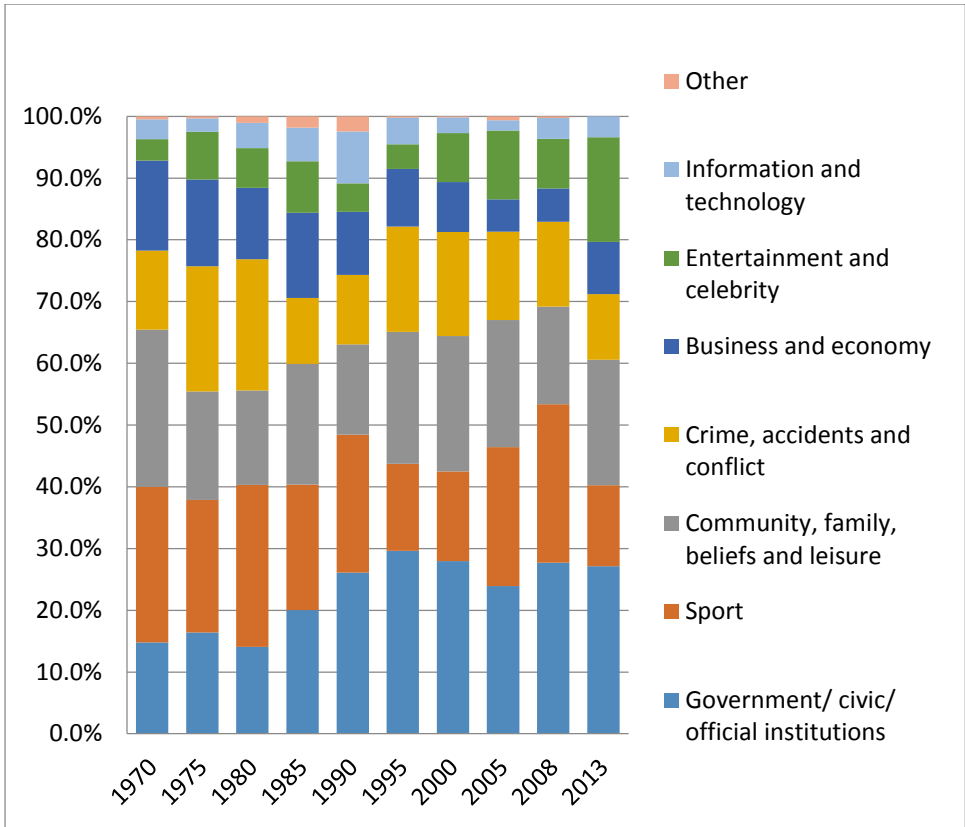
Quantity, quality and localness

In Port Talbot, and very likely elsewhere too, cuts to staff and the closure of district offices meant the quality of the news was gradually eroded in several key areas. The quantity of news halved when the *Guardian* shut, but it had already fallen by 23.9 per cent before that – an aggregate loss of 66.3 per cent.

Quality was also impacted:

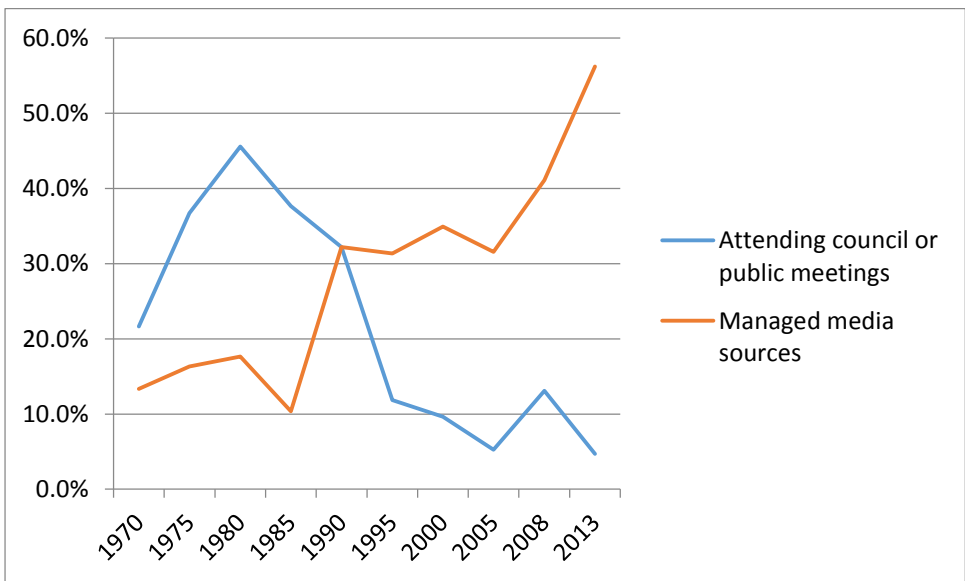
- Localness: the localness of stories diminished, in particular in the number of Port Talbot voices that were quoted, but also in the coverage of certain topics of news that are linked to community cohesion or democracy. Local sports coverage, in particular, fell dramatically, and this can be linked to a community's sense of its own identity.
- What triggered the news: my research found an increasing tendency for stories based on PR or press releases rather than attendance at meetings or interviews
- Representation: representation of local people fell – sources were less local, but also more likely to be high-status, and community reporters were abolished.

Graph 2 shows the coverage of various news topics over the sample period.



Graph 2: The coverage of news topics in Port Talbot 1970–2013

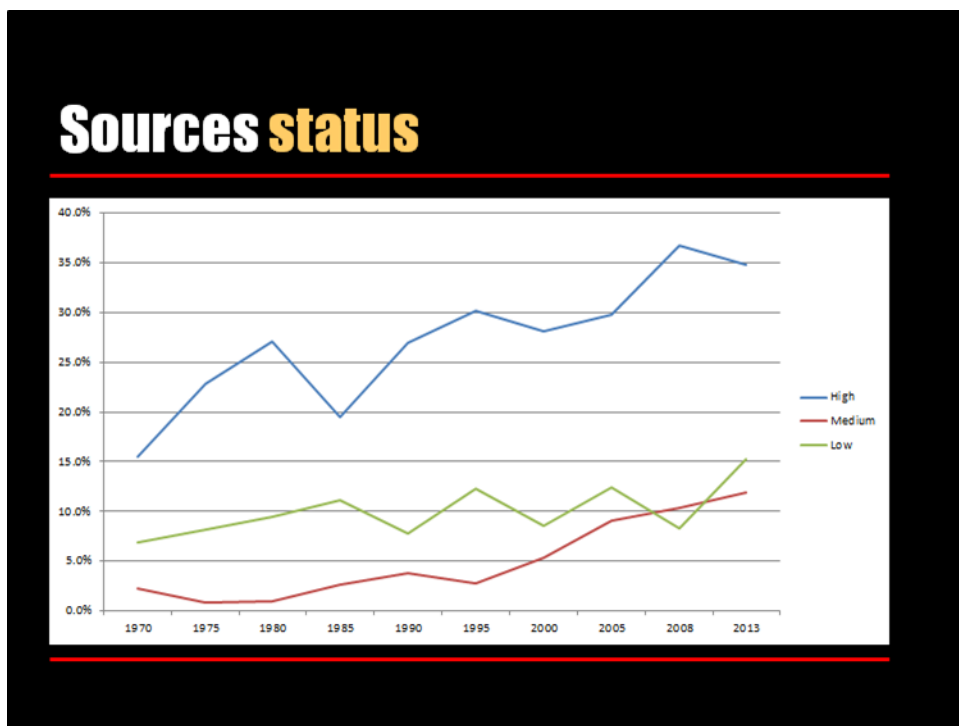
While it is perhaps encouraging to note the increase in the coverage of public interest and democratic reporting such as local government stories, it should also be noted that data suggests this coverage was increasingly based on press releases and meeting agendas rather than attendance at council meetings or face to face encounters. Graph 3 demonstrates this tendency.



Graph 3: How public interest news stories were covered

The danger here, of course, is the erosion of balance or alternative viewpoints in the news, and of the views and agenda of institutions being given undue weight, with the views of local campaigners or residents potentially sidelined or ignored.

This finding is underlined when the status of sources is measured, as demonstrated in Graph 4. In general, it is more common to find individuals quoted in the news now than it was in 1970, but the figures showing the status of sources show disproportionate increases.

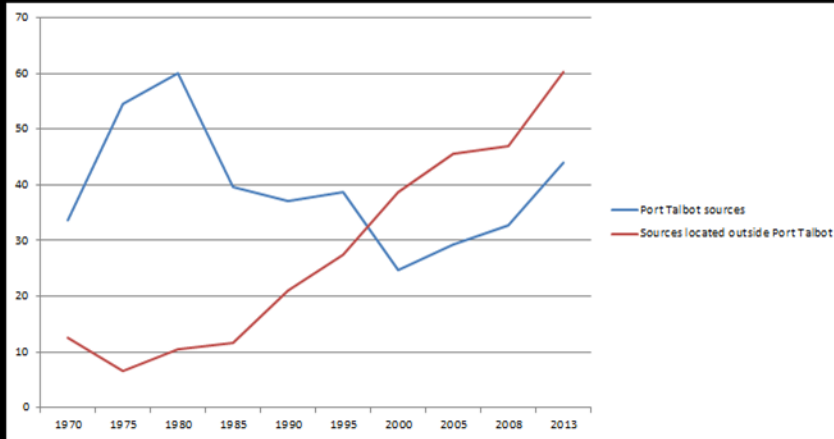


Graph 4: the status of sources quote in Port Talbot news

Increasingly, the trend is in reporting the concerns and voices of high status voices (such as politicians and government spokespeople), with those of lower (members of the public) or medium (celebrities or sports people) status given less prominence. The use of high status sources increased 22 per cent over the sample period, while the use of low status sources rose only 7 per cent.

The news also became less local, as Graph 5 demonstrates. Over time, people who lived in Port Talbot became less likely to speak in stories about their town.

Sources localness



Graph 5: How local were news sources?

Scrutiny, representation, information

Journalism is generally defined as offering a ‘fourth estate’, scrutinising role in public life, ideally enabling the public to become well informed about important issues, to have their views and concerns represented to those in authority, and to be assured that those in authority are given adequate scrutiny.

My results showed that local people are not well enough informed about local issues, that they do not feel represented, and that scrutiny is impaired.

Detailed findings are laid out in full in my thesis, but here is a selection of the main points:

- The scrutiny role has increasingly fallen on the shoulders of local residents, who attend council meetings and read detailed reports and documents, but who lack the power to obtain answers to questions, and to disseminate their concerns or viewpoints to a large enough audience
- Many such activists or “armchair auditors” testified that they found it difficult to obtain information or speak to the correct staff member, and institutions were found to be opaque and difficult to penetrate

- There was abundant evidence of confusion, lack of fore-knowledge of important issues or changes (meaning local people felt powerless to act or have their voice heard), and the use of rumour and speculation was high
- Results suggested that most local people are not actively engaged in seeking news and information. Of those who do (35.7 per cent), they mostly look for information about sport (33 per cent) and cultural events (25 per cent), and few people seek out information about the local council (10 per cent) or politics (3 per cent). The serendipity effect, of readers being exposed to information they have not sought out for its own sake, is diminished by current news consumption habits.
- Audiences now rely on a varied mix of media when actively seeking out particular information. Newspapers form 7.4 per cent of this share, online sources including social media 17.9 per cent, and broadcast media 8.9 per cent. But significantly friends and family made up 15.3 per cent, and companies or direct providers of information (eg a theatre, sports club or local council phone line) made up 26.2 of news-seeking sources.
- The data suggest significant numbers of residents are finding out about important issues by stumbling across them in physical spaces. These include planning application signs, protest notices, campaign stalls, barriers on thoroughfares and graffiti.
- Residents seem relatively adept at questioning news sources and looking in more than one place for verification of a story. However this is often motivated by an underlying lack of trust in official and media outlets.
- There is significant evidence that news is going unreported. Activists told me they found it difficult to gain the ear of journalists. Residents told me they knew of issues that had not received coverage and that information was difficult to find.
- There is anger and despondency among residents, with focus group respondents feeling that they were not represented and not listened to: "What the point? Nobody ever listens to us anyway"
- My findings suggest that even basic knowledge was relatively low among survey respondents. Only 56.6 per cent of people were able to answer correctly the political persuasion of their local MP as Labour – the party has

held the Aberavon constituency since 1922, and Labour also controls the local council. More detailed political knowledge was even less abundant: at the regional political level (i.e. the Welsh Assembly), only 14.7 per cent of people were able to name a local or regional AM, while 11 per cent named someone incorrectly, and 74 per cent said they did not know. Meanwhile, at the local political level (i.e. the local council), 27.5 per cent were able to name council leader Ali Thomas's job, while 0.5 per cent got it wrong and 72 per cent did not know. The high proportion of 'don't know' responses, which, as Page and Shapiro (1983) found, has been shown to correlate with low government responsiveness to public opinion: or put another way, "policy moves in harmony with opinion changes more often when 'don't know' survey responses are few" (Page & Shapiro, 1992, p. 393).

- In focus groups, all the age groups showed signs of frustration, some even outright anger. The participants of FG3, the 18–30 focus group, appeared to be least engaged with traditional media, most negative about the town as a place to live, and were the most volatile and outwardly angry of all the groups. They spoke at some length about taking potentially illegal, impulsive, direct action against the closure of Junction 41 of the M4, as the following exchange demonstrates:

Male Speaker 1: I'd be very tempted to go up there with a disc cutter and just open it [the barrier] up myself and then drive on it.
MS2: Need a revolution really but it's going to take violence for people to listen to it.
Female Speaker 1: It doesn't always take violence.
MS2: A bit of a riot.
MS1: Yes, but in London there was all this big hoo-ha, they caused riots but they got what they wanted. They won't let that happen again.
Interviewer: What did they want, what do you mean they got what they wanted?
MS2: The government listened, and they got a free telly
[laughter]
MS2: The town's upset, they're just going to riot one day, everyone's just going to blow. I think everyone's going to get so angry they're just going to go...
FS: It is going to get to that stage.
FS: I can see it getting to that stage very soon.
MS1: I'm going on Facebook after. I don't use Facebook but I'm going to have a go after, I'm going to start a riot.
(Focus Group 3)

In summary, I found evidence of problems with the flow of information to citizens both through traditional news outlets and other channels such as those established by organisations for direct-to-public communication. Even where the quality or quantity of news might be relatively high, this is not always enough to enable people to participate in local democracy. Information must be *useful* and *timely* in order to enable citizens to react.

When people did know about local issues only the most basic knowledge was prevalent, with rumour and speculation about important details being common in focus group discussions.

Each of the three most basic tenets of fourth estate journalism – informing, representing and scrutiny of the powerful – appear to have been compromised by the withdrawal of journalists from the town. Local people appear less knowledgeable, and find information difficult to access, while word of mouth is a prevalent information source. Representation is difficult when journalists are difficult to access and institutions difficult to approach through opacity. Equally scrutiny is compromised when institutions are opaque and information difficult to obtain. All of these difficulties have direct consequences for residents.

Participation and engagement

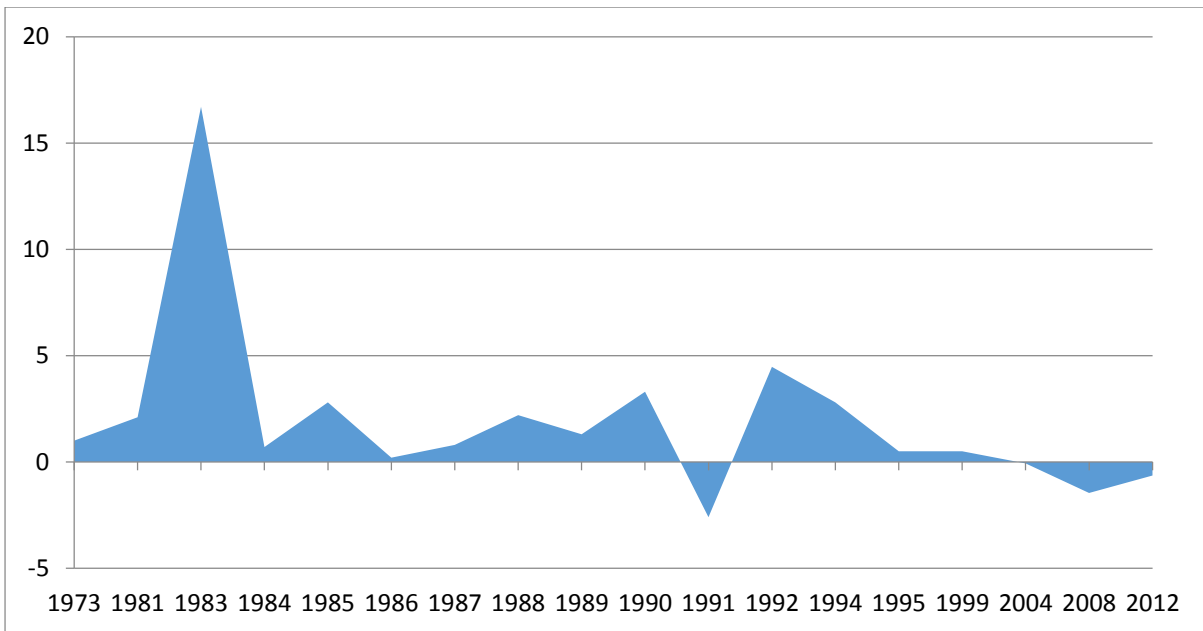
Studies into newspaper closures are few, but a handful of studies into newspaper closures in America have found effects on democratic and civic markers. Schulhofer-Wohl and Garrido's 2009 study of Cincinnati examined, among other effects, voter turnout in the years leading up to, and immediately following, the closure of Cincinnati's second newspaper, the *Cincinnati Post*. They found that the states that were served by the *Cincinnati Post* showed lower election turnout rates, fewer candidates standing for office, and that incumbents were more likely to be re-elected following the closure, concluding that "newspapers – even underdogs such as the *Post*, which had a circulation of just 27,000 when it closed – can have a substantial and measurable impact on public life" (Schulhofer-Wohl & Garrido, 2009, from abstract). Second, Gentzkow, Shapiro and Sinkinson also found election turnouts in Presidential elections were affected by the presence, or lack, of newspapers (2009).

A third study analysed civic newspaper closures in Denver and Seattle looked at data from the 2008 and 2009 Current Population Survey carried out by the United States Census (Shaker, 2014). The study found a decline in civic engagement after the closure of two newspapers in Denver and Seattle compared with civic

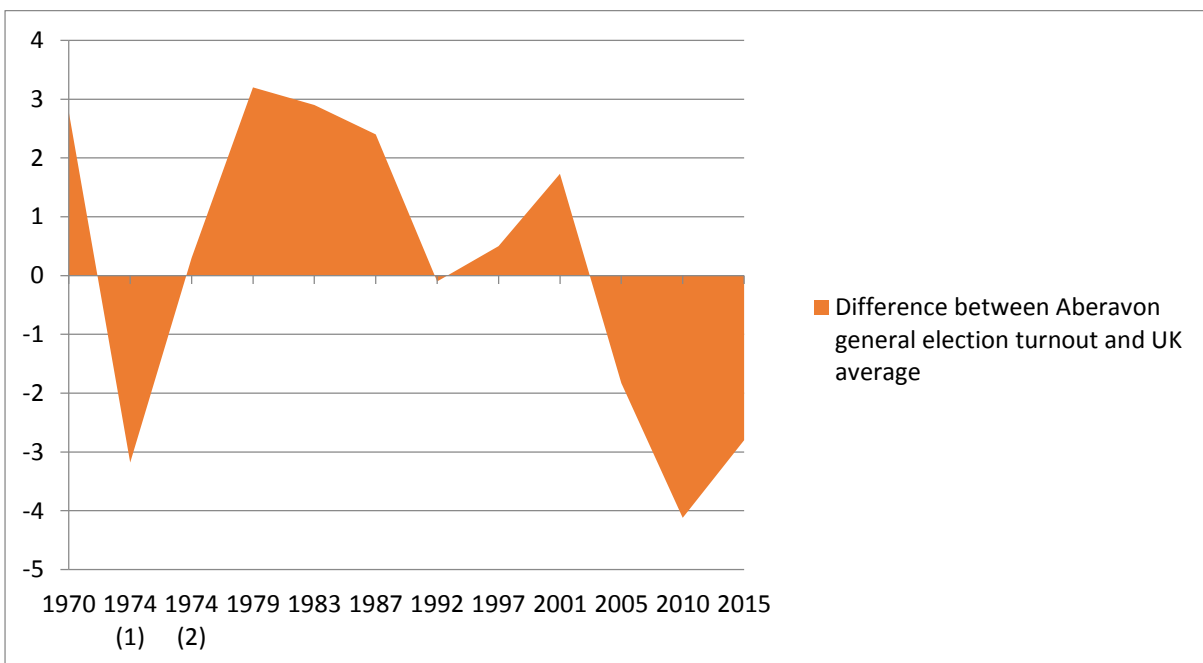
engagement in other major American cities. Again, the focus was on cities that had formerly had two newspapers, and its findings were within the context of one of these newspapers closing while the other continued to publish. Still, it found a measurable decline in civic engagement in the two cities following the newspaper closures compared with similar cities which had not lost newspapers. To measure civic engagement, the study analysed responses to questions about whether respondents had contacted a public official or bought/ boycotted a product or service because of social or political values in the previous 12 months, asked whether they had attended particular groups including a PTA or neighbourhood watch or civic organisation such as a Lions group, or whether they had been an officer or served on a committee in any groups or organisations.

Unfortunately UK studies of social attitudes and civic behaviour do not offer sufficient sample sizes at the local level to replicate this American research – with one exception: election turnout figures. I examined turnout in all three election types – general, local and Welsh Assembly elections measured against UK or Wales turnout averages. However this analysis reveals the declines did not happen (as might have been expected) after the closure of the *Guardian*. Instead, the analysis reveals a drop in election turnout figures after 2000, not after 2009. I have already identified this as a significant turning point in several key areas of news production, quantity and quality, and concluded these declines were associated with the closure of district newspaper offices and the withdrawal of journalists from the community.

It may be that the same effect is in evidence here. Graph 6 **Error! Reference source not found.** and Graph 7 show the percentage point difference between the Aberavon constituency turnout and the UK average for local and general elections.



Graph 6: Percentage point difference in turnout average for local council elections compared with Wales average. Source: Rallings (2006).



Graph 7: Percentage point difference in turnout average for general elections compared with UK average. Source: Kimber (ca 2015).

Between the 1970 and 1999 local elections, turnout for the seats within the Aberavon constituency was an average of 2.45 percentage points above the UK average, but dropped from the 2004 elections onwards to 0.72 percentage points below the UK average. For general elections, the turnout for Aberavon was an average of 1.17 percentage points above the UK average until the 2001 election:

for the 2005–2015 elections this dropped to an average of 2.91 percentage points below the UK average.

Similarly, Aberavon's turnout figures were 0.5 per cent above the Welsh average in the first Welsh Assembly election in 1999 (Morgan, 1999), but since then have dropped below the Welsh average by 0.35 per cent in 2003; 3.66 per cent in 2007 and 4.66 per cent in 2011.

I began the research by questioning whether local newspapers were crucial to the functioning of local democracy, and whether they are missed if they close down. Similar research into newspaper closures in America suggested I would find changes in civic and democratic behaviours such as election turnouts in the years following the newspaper closure, and I anticipated I would find a similar effect in Port Talbot. However, data suggests the turning point in journalism and Port Talbot's democratic deficit happened much sooner, around the year 2000. This is when the decline in certain markers of quality in news stories appeared to worsen, when sources became less local and journalists began to rely more on PR and high status sources and less on local contacts and personal attendance at meetings and events. It is also when Aberavon's election turnout, which had almost exclusively been one or two percentage point above the national average since the 1970s, first fell below average, where it has remained.

Together, the data suggest newspaper closures are not necessarily the crucial moment in any democratic deficit that may arise. Instead, it seems likely that the withdrawal of journalists from local communities may be the marker of a democratic deficit. Redundancies and widespread district office closures therefore point to a problem that is much bigger in scale than we might have realised. There is likely to be a large network of news black holes caused by the withdrawal of local journalism and masked by the continuation of local newspapers that resemble "zombie newspapers" with scaled back staff numbers and a much smaller amount of locally relevant content.

I conclude therefore, that local journalism does matter to communities, and that its withdrawal from the heart of those communities causes damage to the fabric of those communities. I conclude, too, that the problem that needs to be addressed urgently.

It is worth underlining that it is not necessarily local newspapers that need to be saved, but a plurality of local journalists, working within, and accountable to,

communities. The advertising revenue model that allowed this kind of journalism to flourish in past years has proved that it is no longer able to support the required level of journalism in the midst of the structural changes and challenges of the digital age that have emerged in recent decades. Entrepreneurs have attempted to fill the gap in many places with small independent or hyperlocal offerings – our own *Port Talbot Magnet* is an example – and though there have been many successes, only a handful have found sustainability. Many of them continue to rely on advertising revenue for support. However, towns like Port Talbot, which have suffered from the decline and automation of its traditionally industrial economy, much of it centred on steelmaking, is a good example of a community that is in dire need of good quality local journalism, but which is unable to sustain the required level of advertising revenue in its currently weakened local economy.

It is time to change the conversation. The evidence I have presented here shows that local journalism is needed by local citizens and that local democracy suffers where journalism is weakened. Now is the moment to acknowledge the extent of the problem, discuss it widely, and reach a consensus about how we as a society are going to pay for it.

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Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales
Pwyllgor Diwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chyfathrebu / The Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee
Newyddiaduraeth Newyddion yng Nghymru / News Journalism in Wales
CWLC(5) NJW16
Ymateb gan Thomas Sinclair, Pembrokeshire Herald / Evidence from Thomas Sinclair, Pembrokeshire Herald

The issue of news provision in Wales is a complex one.

In my view there are several problems that have affected the news market in Wales, but for the purposes of this response I have concentrated on three I believe are important and have dealt with a further key issue distinct from those.

Firstly:

Few 'local' newspapers are locally-owned: across Wales, the local newspaper scene is dominated by large businesses who lack an immediate connection to the areas in which they sell newspapers. The brands are local brands, the companies behind them are seldom – if ever – based in the areas they serve. We are wholly owned and based in south West Wales. None of our print media competitors are.

Newspapers have, therefore, become a homogenised product, carefully packaged, vehicles for advertising and not news. Look at one newspaper website from a newspaper group and you have seen them all – no matter how many titles they publish and where they publish them.

Even their most determined booster knows that it is very seldom that one of the papurau bro has the resources or reach to break a major story with ramifications beyond the comparatively small circulation areas they cover. In addition, when we reached out to the papurau bro in an effort to create a mutually beneficial arrangement by sharing our news stories with them in exchange for local Welsh language content, we were rebuffed.

The market needs to be encouraged to become more diverse and more locally responsive – and also less insular.

This can be done by direct intervention by the Welsh Government by:

- (a) Funding or providing training opportunities for small local news organisations. Multi-nationally owned or UK-owned newspaper groups can well afford to fend for themselves. Smaller news organisations find the cost prohibitive and access difficult. We have found that people are desperate for something other than 'soft' stories or uncritical voices. As I

have found to my personal cost, working in media has plenty of pitfalls and access to training and to support is essential

- (b) Targeting support at start-ups – whether digital media, print, or radio – or businesses with a turnover under a certain amount per year and making the process of applying for support smoother. How can it be right that something as relatively straightforward as asking for assistance lands a business with a consultant's bill because the process of application is so complex and time consuming: it's like trying to copy out Shakespeare using only contents of a tin of alphabet spaghetti;
- (c) Legislative change – as in my second point below.

Secondly:

The institutional interests of what is sometimes called 'Welsh News Media' often seems to me to be little more than a self-perpetuating racket which encourages local news monopolies at the cost of diversity.

You do not have to look far to see that disincentives for reporting 'hard news' are significant. Many local newspapers are – if not dependent upon local authority advertising – commercially sensitive to any change in the way councils and other local authorities place public notices. It is my view that the requirement on authorities to publish public notices in print publications is a nonsense in the age of digital media. It is further my view that the commercial sensitivity of some local newspapers to local authority revenue both infantilises their news coverage and prevents proper exposure of news stories that would and should be published in the public interest.

It cannot possibly be right that a local authority can attempt to bring a newspaper to heel by withdrawing its advertising – as happened to both the Carmarthen Journal and South Wales Guardian in the past. I have often said that it beggars belief that large news organisations with significantly greater resources than our titles have apparently not noticed or at least been aware of stories which Herald newspaper titles have broken or propelled into the public eye. There is no doubt in my mind that this has been a case of who has paid the piper has called the tune – and in some cases dictated the dance steps.

We offered – when we launched the Pembrokeshire Herald in 2013 – to carry Pembrokeshire County Council public notices free of charge as a public service. Our offer was refused/ignored.

In response, my Chief Writer found and published a list of all the consultations Pembrokeshire County Council was then undertaking on a full page in our newspaper and pointed out that some of them had been launched just before the Christmas holidays. At least one of those consultations was extended as a result and it contributed to a greater interest in the authority's public consultations both then and in the future.

That, in my view, is what local newspapers should be trying to do – to engage people with what is happening in their local communities and in issues in which they have a direct stake.

It is nonsense that Pembrokeshire County Council preferred to continue to spend tens of thousands of pounds, of public money on paid advertising. We subsequently established that one newspaper group had received over £130K in one year from the authority. I am not saying that the newspaper group concerned soft-pedalled on stories in order to preserve its relationship with the Council, but if I were cynical I would suggest that sort of money can buy a certain lack of urgency in reporting 'bad' news.

As long as the unhealthy relationship between public body advertising and news media exists in Wales – and I include the Welsh Government in this – then there will remain an imbalance between commercial considerations and news reporting.

As pressures increase on local authority budgets, it is surely time to change the public notice rules to shake out, modernise, and democratise the ways in which local authorities spend increasingly scarce public resources. There are 22 local authorities in Wales: if they are spending – for example only – an average of £70K a year on press advertising, not only are they being ripped off but that is £1.5m of public money that could be spent on public services.

I would also curb councils publishing their own magazines carrying advertising. That is not only anti-competitive but – again – a fundamental misuse of public resources. Spending money telling those who receive such magazines and newsletters that everything in the garden is rosy when it is anything but, is both

self-indulgent and ethically questionable. Councils and other public authorities have press offices and communication teams – some of them very well-funded.

Those press and communication operations must not compete for advertising with local media companies: that leads to all sorts of questions about transparency and ethics. It is not a huge step to take to see why some businesses might be persuaded that sticking an advert on a local authority's website or in a local authority produced newsletter or magazine might be in its interest. It is the appearance of fair dealing that matters, as well as its reality.

Thirdly

I have touched upon the cookie-cutter nature of some news websites. I believe that traditional mainstream media have missed an online trick. Not only are their websites overburdened with intrusive advertising – particularly video and audio pop ups – but they offer no rich content to website readers.

We have found that video news reports, sometimes short, sometimes longer, have attracted a significant number of views to our websites. They are one of the most popular things we offer online. Those videos are produced in-house by our own team. There is more than one way to market and I do not understand why there is a reluctance to exploit the opportunities digital media represents.

We have interviewed most of West Wales' leading politicians and business leaders on camera and our website response is excellent both to those pieces and to responsive reporting of local news events and stories using video. Again, it seems to me that large corporations are simply content to plough the same furrow and concentrate on clicks from Google on listicles than on reporting issues or topics of interest.

If news media is to survive and thrive in Wales it needs to remember that it is NEWS which is its primary delivery function. People don't like being told what to think and how to think it any more than they are prepared to put up with lazy and samey news coverage. . I appreciate the news business is a business, but it is the business of news – not the business of 'top ten cat names in Treorchy'.

Welsh language

I am not a Welsh-speaker. I do not read Welsh or write it. I am, however, very firmly of the belief that part of the role of the news media in Wales is to carry Welsh language content.

I have employed and continue to employ Welsh language first speakers, people who get by with conversational Welsh, and those who can read basic Welsh and get by with it. I have also employed people with qualification at A Level with Welsh as a second language. I do not know how that course is taught or at what level it is pitched, but for all the use that qualification is in compiling or writing Welsh news they may as well not have bothered with it. That is outside this committee's scope, but it is an active concern to me as an employer.

Herald Newspapers have carried Welsh content since our first edition in Pembrokeshire over four years ago. We did so because – as it was put very strongly to me – ‘you cannot be a Welsh newspaper and not have Welsh language content’. It has been a difficult process for us, but we have carried unique Welsh language content in the terms of news reports and interviews in Welsh.

If the Welsh Government is serious about promoting the Welsh language then it is my view that it should help and encourage small and local English-medium newspapers who carry Welsh language content. The Welsh Government cannot rely on small insular Welsh-medium publications to achieve its aims of promoting language learning – and increasing daily Welsh language use – by concentrating resources on websites and publications that reach out only to those who are already fluent in Welsh. Across our four titles, we carry around six pages of Welsh in three titles and two in another one. We do that largely because of the beliefs of a senior member of our staff on the issue and because it has helped create a distinctive presence for us in the market.

One of the results has been that some of our competitors have upped their own game in that regard. That has to be a good thing and it is a good thing the Welsh Government should be encouraging, whether by direct support for small titles or websites to carry news or by providing targeted training in writing and compiling Welsh language news for English first language news staff.

Bethan Jenkins AM
Chair of the Culture, Welsh Language and
Communications Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay

6 June 2017

Dear Bethan,

National Assembly for Wales Official Languages Scheme

Thank you for your letter dated 31 May 2017, and may I thank the members of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee for your willingness to contribute to the scrutiny of the Assembly Commission's Official Languages Scheme for the Fifth Assembly. May I also thank you for your warm welcome and kind words about the support offered to Assembly Members to work in the official language of their choice. As indicated during the session, we will be considering all comments made during the consultation, and will amend the draft Scheme accordingly before the new Scheme is debated and adopted.

You requested further information on a number of areas, which I will address in the order they are listed in your letter.



Further Information

Accessibility of the Assembly's website for visually impaired people.

Jeremy Miles raised an interesting point which I agreed to look into. Screen reader software is used by individual users who require it and may be purchased by users to enable them to access any website. We have explored this issue with our ICT and Diversity and Inclusion teams, and established that the voices used in the screen reader software alluded to by Jeremy Miles do not always work well in the Welsh language, as he mentioned during the discussion. However, in recognition of this difficulty, and the fact that some users will wish to use screen reader software to read text in the language of their choice and across any website, the Welsh Government and the RNIB have funded a project to develop synthetic voices specifically for use with Welsh language text. These voices are available to download free of charge. It is hoped that companies and organisations will use those voices in the development of text to voice software. The Assembly Commission will certainly encourage our partners to use this technology in any future developments.

Support and training for Microsoft Translator users

The Microsoft Translator facility is available to all Assembly Member, Support Staff and Commission Staff. When the provision was launched in 2014, we provided an extensive training programme for users over the following months. Following the election in 2016, further training was offered and taken up as part of the induction process. We will make this offer again as part of the professional development programme and raise awareness the facility on an ongoing basis. Officials will also work with the Members' Liaison and Professional Development Team to provide appropriate additional training for users.

Improvement Targets

As you note in your letter, the Assembly Commission is not persuaded that the use of quantitative targets is an appropriate way to achieve our ambition of being a truly bilingual organisation. The Scheme builds on the significant improvements made in the Fourth Assembly, outlines the steps that we will take and the areas



that we will focus upon in order to realise that ambition in full by 2021. We believe that delivering each of our themes by the end of the Fifth Assembly will lead us towards that ambition. The Assembly Commission believes that the annual plenary debate gives all Assembly Members an opportunity to scrutinise its work on implementing and progressing the objectives of the Official Languages Scheme. The Members' satisfaction survey provides us with annual feedback on our bilingual services and enables us to address any particular concerns raised directly with the Member or their office. We also receive feedback through official and unofficial channels regarding the services provided. Assembly Commission officials meet other organisations across Wales to exchange best practice, with Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg to discuss progress and to exchange ideas, and we would be happy to meet with any other organisations wishing to establish a similar relationship. We would welcome scrutiny from your Committee as part of the annual reporting cycle should you feel that this would afford you additional reassurance.

Recruitment Issues

I was pleased to hear the positive comments from your Committee Members regarding the potential move to a new fluency framework. I wish to take this opportunity to clarify the Assembly Commission's intentions in terms of the timescale and implementation of the new framework. It will in fact be based on a 5 point scale with the lowest point – level 1 – described as 'basic linguistic courtesy'. This would entail being able to recognise, pronounce and use familiar phrases and names, such as Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru correctly, and to understand basic texts such as simple e-mails.

The Assembly Commission will establish a working group with membership including staff networks and trade union representatives to ensure that the proposed system is fit for purpose.

Under the new system, the language skills level for any new posts, or any vacancies will automatically be set at 'basic linguistic courtesy' unless the Service Language Plan, agreed by the Head of Service requires a higher level. The new framework will provide a descriptor of the skills required for each level, and



factors such as the number of bilingual staff in each team, and the type of work undertaken by those individual teams will be factors in determining skill levels for all posts.

Existing staff will not be required to acquire any additional language skills should they wish to remain in their current post, although training and support will be available for any existing staff wishing to do so. However, should they apply for a vacant or new post, they will be required to demonstrate the language skills level associated with that post.

Please find attached the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) which has been assessed by an external equalities organisation acting as a 'critical friend'. Feedback was extremely positive and a couple of additional action points have emerged for us to consider once we start planning implementation. As a measure of good practice, the Commission's intention is to publish all its EQIAs once they have been reviewed. The attached copy is therefore provided in the spirit of openness and may I ask that it is not published at this stage. Our intention is to maintain the EQIA as a 'living' document that will be reviewed at regular intervals.

On behalf of the Assembly Commission may I thank the Committee for its robust scrutiny of the draft Official Languages Scheme for the Fifth Assembly. I look forward to continuing our relationship for the foreseeable future.

Yours sincerely,



Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg / We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English



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Agenda Item 9

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